754 The most common affliction of the supernatural was *caushi*. The *caushi* was not a spirit but an object carved to a certain form by a sorcerer, given malignant animation by him, and sent sometimes against certain people, but usually against anyone that it might encounter. All illness was caused by *caushi* and, therefore, ultimately by witchcraft.

754 Shamanism

The chief function of the Mundurucú shaman was curing. Among his other duties was the ceremonial one of guarding the people against the attacks of *Turumarí* during certain rites. He was also responsible for putting in a deep sleep by a magical spell the people of a village about to be attacked and for feeding the spirit "mothers" of the game.

The power of shamanism was hereditary in the patrilineal line and present since birth. All the children of a shaman, including daughters, possessed the power, but, today, the women do not practice any more. In the aboriginal culture, female shamans had only a few specific ceremonial functions and did not cure. Curing was done by the common practice of blowing smoke on the sick person and then extracting the evil object, or *caushi*, by massage and suction. The shaman then prescribed certain herbs and roots applied externally or drunk mixed with water that were supposed to heal the internal damage done by the evil object. During the cure, the shaman smoked a large cigarette to generate the necessary curative smoke, but he did not inhale in large enough quantities to produce [illegible] as do the

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776 925 These *Tawapori* make a thin, whistling noise as they travel through the air. Though the porpoise *Tawapori* are handsome, shamans report the others to be ugly beyond description. A further distinction between the porpoise and the other *Tawapori* is that the latter have no fixed abodes, whereas the porpoises have cities at the bottom of deep quiet stretches of the Tapajós River.

776 753 All types of *Tawapori* travel only at night. They frequently lurk on the peripheries of villages, and, consequently, few Munduruká venture beyond the circle of houses after dark. The weapon of the *Tawapori* is a magical stone that it throws at anyone who comes within range. The stone is believed to enter the victim and, invariably to cause fever, pains in the stomach and sides, and vomiting. The stones vary in size; the larger ones are thought to be the more powerful. Also, the amount of damage done by the stone depends on the distance from which it is thrown. If the *Tawapori* is within fifteen feet, death is almost instantaneous. At longer ranges, only temporary illness may result.

776 755 There are no means by which attacks of the *Tawapori* can be prevented, but Munduruká shamans have techniques for extracting the harmful stones. Extreme care must be taken in this treatment, for the stone maintains its malignancy even after being extracted. Only smaller stones can be touched with the bare hands, and even these must be treated gingerly. The stone, however, is afraid of the bow, and the bow is frequently used to drive the stone into a fire, where it is destroyed.

776 797 It was extremely difficult to obtain full information about the *Tawapori* while in the field because the Munduruká informants hesitated even to speak of this spirit. To mention it was believed dangerous, and it was also considered to be such a frightful subject that any prolonged discussion of it was in poor taste. This attitude caused a curious situation among the missionized Munduruká. The priests translated the Devil as *Tawapori*, and their sermons to the Indians were replete with references to the greatly feared demon and threats that sinfulness would be punished by condemnation to the "fire of the *Tawapori*." They were evidently ignorant of the full range of *Tawapori* beliefs shared by the Munduruká and were accordingly unaware of the acute discomfort and revulsion aroused in their listeners.

776 925 One of the commonest beliefs of *Tawapori* in the Amazon Basin is that of the fresh-water porpoise transformed at night into a forest demon. Among the Brazilian *caboclos*, or backwoodsmen, the porpoise is believed to ensnare victims through its great sexual attraction and potency. Wagley reports that in the town of Itá the porpoise is thought to emit the high whistling sound characteristic of the Munduruká *Tawapori*, although there is no indication that the porpoise is identified with the spirit.* Brazilian neighbors of the Munduruká also believe in the magical power of the porpoise, and it is quite possible that the Indian concept of the porpoise type *Tawapori* was borrowed from the civilized population. If this is true, we are presented with the seeming paradox whereby aboriginal culture elements have been spread by people having a basically European culture. This

776 171 177

* Wagley, 1953, p. 240.

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rather than directly from their immediate Brazilian neighbors. In our present state of knowledge of the ethnology of the Amazon region, reliable reconstructions of such diffusion are most difficult.

In the preceding discussion of spirit mothers of game animals, it was mentioned that the *patóka ñi* revenges itself upon humans by stealing their souls. This is one of the gravest afflictions that may befall a Munduruc, and only the performance of a ceremony is sufficient to regain the soul of a stricken person; ordinary shamanistic curing techniques are inadequate. Men can lose their souls to the game through a variety of offenses. The insults to the game already described are the most common means of occasioning the anger of the spirit mothers. One can also lose his soul if he sits too close to a fire over which the head of a game animal is roasting, and he is struck by the optic fluid from an exploding eye. Another means of losing one's soul is to have adulterous relations with the wife of a member of the *Bia ñi* (Mothers of the Tapir) society, which is responsible for impersonating the tapir during certain ceremonies. In these cases, the tapir robs the soul of the offending male. The members of the *Bia ñi* society, themselves, are in danger of losing their souls during those ceremonies in which they perform. They must be especially careful not to bathe in the streams during rituals, as the four *ñi*, or mother-of the prego monkey, will surely steal their souls. To prevent this they bathe in the house from gourds.

Women may also lose their souls through offenses against the game, but since women do not hunt, this rarely occurs. However, a woman who bathes during her first menses or shortly after the birth of a child may have her soul taken by the jararuca snake. Either the large or small species of this reptile family robs the soul, depending on whether the woman is on land or in the water at that time. The jararuca turns the soul over to the tapir, and it begins the long journey described below.

The journey of the stolen soul is believed by the Munduruc to be a terrifying and danger-fraught experience. Although the *patóka ñi* is often spoken of as stealing the soul, the actual theft appears to be the work of the tapir and, less commonly, of other animals and spirit mothers of species. After the tapir steals the soul, it runs with it through thick underbrush and swims across rivers. The beast then gives the soul to the peccary, which travels for some time with it and then passes it on to a lesser game animal. The soul is finally transferred to the smallest species of monkey which, in turn, gives it to the largest variety of fish. It passes on to smaller fish until it finally reaches the smallest species. At this point the journey ends, and the afflicted person dies.

The person whose soul has been robbed lies in a semicoma and dreams of the trials to which his soul is exposed. The rigors of the trip are such that the person grows steadily weaker, and death may occur at almost any time during the travels of the stolen soul. If the animal with which it is traveling dies, the sick person dies also. Two parts of the journey are especially dangerous. At one point the soul passes within a stone's throw of the house of a prego monkey, which throws stones at it. If the soul is struck by only a drop of the stones, its owner dies. In another

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756 is used by the shaman to extract from afflicted people the *yakip*, or malignant object sent by the mother of the game. All these instruments are inert until the shaman blows power-giving tobacco smoke upon them. They are then thought to be "alive" and to have "strength."

Disease and Its Treatment

753 In order to understand fully the important role that the shaman plays among the Munduruká, their theories of disease and affliction must be outlined. There is practically no human misfortune that cannot be attributed to supernatural influences. If a Munduruká suffers a slight cut on his foot, he may admit that it was due to sheer misfortune. But if he incurs a serious wound, the shaman is usually consulted and invariably attributes the affliction to the vengeance of the mother of the game. Any infection, pain, or other aftereffect of the wound is generally thought to be the work of the *yakip*, which is sent by the mother of the game or by the soul of the animal offended by the wounded man. Similarly, a snake bite, a fall from a tree, or any other serious misadventure that cannot be classified as a disease is usually diagnosed by the shaman as the vengeance of the animal world.

Diseases also are the result of evil supernatural influences. But whereas serious accidents are attributed to the spirit mother and therefore to the negligence or stupidity of the stricken person, disease strikes people regardless of their activities. And though afflictions that have clear and obvious causes, as cuts or snake bites, are also thought to be the vengeance of the supernaturals associated with the animals, disease is caused by sorcerers. All sorcerers are shamans who consciously [754] wish to hurt their fellow men. The sorcerer causes disease by modeling a variety of objects and blowing smoke upon them to give them life. The evil objects, called *ewak*, are then wafted off on the wind to wander through the air until they encounter some human. Invisible to ordinary people, they enter the body and cause illness. The particular illness depends upon the material out of which the *ewak* was modeled and the shape given it by the sorcerer.

● 755 757 Two distinct processes are required for the proper cure of illness. First the *ewak* is extracted from the sick person's body by the shaman, and he then prescribes certain herbal remedies to repair the damage caused by it. The first part of the cure is uniform for all *ewak*; the herbal remedy prescribed is, however, specific for the malady.

755 276 The process of extracting a *ewak* is extremely simple. The sick person strips his or her clothes from the part of the body where the pain is localized and sits or lies on the ground. The treatment most often takes place in the patient's dwelling, but the shaman sometimes receives the ill in the men's house. After the patient is prepared, the shaman takes one of his large cigarettes, which are wrapped in a thin layer of the inner bark of the tanari tree, and commences to smoke. As he smokes he crouches over the sick person and intently stares at his body. The shaman does not inhale or swallow excessive amounts of smoke, and narcotic effects are specifically denied. Rather, the smoke heightens his extra-visual ability

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to see the *cauši* within the patient's body, and he is considered to be in a state of intense concentration. During this period the many observers of the cure fall silent, and even the children are hushed. After completing his examination and identification of the *cauši* lodged within the patient's body, the shaman blows clouds of smoke over him. This is an essential part of the cure, for the tobacco smoke is believed to dislodge the *cauši* from its place deep within the sick person and to bring it nearer to the surface, from where it can be easily extracted. Once the shaman has accomplished this end, he commences to massage the patient's body, stroking inward toward the point where the pain is localized. At the completion of the massaging the *cauši* is believed to be directly below the skin and just above the source of pain. The shaman quickly applies his mouth to this point and sucks noisily at the patient's skin. He then draws away and deftly removes the *cauši* from his mouth, into which he has supposedly sucked it, and holds it out in his open palm for all to observe. He examines it with great care for some time and throws it into a fire, where it is thought to be completely destroyed. The object exhibited by the shaman is usually a small piece of wood or the pit of a palm fruit. The sleight of hand involved apparently requires no great ingenuity, but everybody is firmly convinced that the shaman has really extracted an evil object from the patient. I was unable to induce any shaman to reveal the innermost secrets of his art, but I am convinced that the shaman, too, believes that he extracts *cauši*, elusive though his reasoning may be.

The sole deviation from the above procedure occurs during the extraction of a very large and dangerous *cauši*. The shaman localizes the object and brings it to the surface of the body in the usual manner, but he extracts it with a quick, grabbing motion of the hand.

The *cauši* is visible to the shaman both when flying freely through the air and when lodged in the patient's body. Ordinary persons can see it only after the shaman has extracted it. There are ten reported varieties of *cauši*, each of which represents a type of disease recognized by the Mundurucú. The *cauši* is believed to wreak considerable damage while in the sick person, and its extraction and destruction is not sufficient for a full recovery. This can only be through the application of herbal remedies, each of which is a specific for a certain type of *cauši*. These medicines are thought by the Mundurucú to be either "hot" or "cold"; the *cauši* is believed to cause considerable internal bleeding, and hot medicines remove this old blood from the body, and on the other hand, cold medicines reduce fever and alleviate pain.

The following is a list of the ten varieties of disease recognized by the Mundurucú and a description of the *cauši* believed to cause each and the medicinals used to repair their damage.

1. *Dau* (leg) *pipí* (pain), or pain in the leg, is caused by a *cauši* carved in the shape of a sting ray and made from its tail. This *cauši* lies on the floor in the doorways of houses and waits for an unwary person to step on it. Although it causes intense pains in the leg, its effects are not fatal. To cure the aftereffects of *dau*

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pipí, the shaman heats the leaves of a tracuá vine over a fire and applies them to the center of the pain. This poultice, despite being heated, is considered a cold remedy.

2. *Ipse pipí*, or pain in the stomach, is instigated by a *cauí* that is made from a bitter manioc tuber or a piece of soap. When the object is made from soap it causes a mild stomach-ache, but when made from bitter manioc the poison is believed capable of killing the victim. Three varieties of cold medicine are used to cure the aftereffects of this illness. An unidentified species of potato is grated in water, and part of the mixture is drunk while the rest is poured over the patient's stomach. Another remedy uses a few scrapings from the castanha de arara mixed in water and taken both externally and internally. Also, the root of the jambú plant is beaten into a half-gourd of water and drunk.

3. *Eksabí pipí*, pain in the back, differs from the other ailments in that it is caused by a *cauí* that is actually a living bird. This bird, a species of curujá da noite, can be heard at night, but is never seen. When it flies directly above the house, the inhabitants are in danger of being afflicted with backache. A cold remedy for backache consists of a paste of grated ginger root which is applied to the affected parts. Another medicine is made in a similar fashion from the root of an unidentified shrub.

4. The material and form of the *cauí* that causes *cúnabí pipí*, or pain in the side, was not known by my informants, although five remedies were listed as effective in its cure. The following three are cold medicines. Pau de candeia is grated into boiling water and the compound drunk while still very hot. A broth is also made from envira de cacao, and grated deer antler is mixed with cold water and used both internally and externally. Hot medicines include a poultice of heated jamarú leaf and a broth made of the ashes of kamaiu cane mixed in hot water.

5. The common cold is called *ochó ochó*, an onomatopoetic word, and is believed to be caused by a *cauí* which consists of a bit of talcum powder rolled in paper. Four cold remedies include hot drinks made with lemon, ginger root, the root of an unidentified shrub, and the sap from a tree. The only hot remedy known is made by boiling mel de chupe and taking it internally.

6. The *cauí* that causes *nanchai pipí*, or pain in the uterus, is made from the root of an unidentified tree. Menstrual pains are not believed to be caused by this object, nor is it thought to cause labor pains. A hot medicine, used to free the woman of the old blood from the intra-uterine bleeding caused by this *cauí*, is made by cutting up the root of a paxiuba palm and boiling it in water. Some of this preparation is administered internally, and the remainder is placed in a pot below the woman's hammock. The rising vapors are believed to aid in the cure. Ashes of the paxiuba palm are also mixed in water and drunk.

7. *Paiat*, or fever, generally accompanies stomach-ache, according to informants. Actually, such a concurrence of the two afflictions occurs during an attack of chronic malaria, and the stomach-ache is, more accurately, a pain in the liver. Two cold remedies are used to reduce the fever. The first is made by grating a

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vine in hot water and applying the mixture to the stomach. The other consists of the trunks of very young buriti palms crushed in water. Part of this mixture is drunk, and the rest is applied externally to the torso of the sick person.

8. *Ok pipí*, or intestinal pain, is claimed by the same *ewaik* as *ipoo pipí*, or stomach-ache. However, the term *ok pipí* is in reality reserved for dysentery, for it is always accompanied by severe diarrhea. The medicines used for stomach pains are considered effective in the relief of intestinal pains also, but two additional cold remedies are used as specifics for the diarrhea. The roots of a certain shrub are boiled in water, part of which is taken internally and the rest allowed to steam below the hammock. The leaves of this shrub are also applied to the abdomen as a poultice. The same use is made of the leaves of the *muriri pagé*, a water plant. The local Brazilians also boil the leaves of this plant and place the steaming pot below the hammock of a bewitched person. The vapors are believed to cause an evil object to fall out of the victim's body.

9. *A pipé*, or headache, is treated by mixing *cravo de cantandeira* in water and applying the solution to the head. *Uaripe* Brazil nuts are also grated into water and similarly applied. Both remedies are considered cold. The nature of the *ewaik* that causes headache was not known by the informants interviewed.

10. The tenth and last ailment is a three-stage sickness generally known by the name applied to its first stage, called *ajuruni*. In this primary phase, the afflicted man or woman becomes unhappy and listless and eats mud, soap, and other inedible substances. The symptoms increase in severity in the next stage, or *pouka*, and the victim becomes thin, yellow, and "bloodless." Finally, the patient passes into the state known as *tzaboka*, at the end of which he usually dies. During the final illness, the person's soul sometimes becomes one of the dreaded wandering souls. The symptoms are descriptive of the chronic forms of a number of illnesses, such as malaria, dysentery, and jaundice. The Munduruci attribute it to a *ewaik* made of roasted earthworms rolled into a ball and spread in the air. No remedies were known.

A person can be afflicted by more than one *ewaik* at a time, and the shaman often recommends a number of herbal preparations. The shaman does not himself administer these remedies, but instructs the kinsmen of the sick person in their use. They then collect the proper herbs and apply them.

The techniques used by the Munduruci shaman are so widely distributed throughout eastern South America that any attempt to trace their provenience would be overly lengthy. The shaman's use of tobacco smoke and the technique of sucking and massage are almost universal in the Amazon area. Of equally wide distribution are the use of herbs and the various methods of applying them. Infusions, external applications, and steam baths are, as Lowie indicates,* known among a number of tribes of the region.

One aspect of Munduruci herbal medicine worthy of further discussion is the division of remedies into hot and cold categories. This distinction is made throughout most of Latin America with regard to both medicines and food. The Mun-

* Lowie, 1948, pp. 21–22.

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Munduruú, however, do not classify their foods in this manner, suggesting that the concept was perhaps borrowed from their Brazilian neighbors together with certain medicinal recipes. Furthermore, although the list of diseases and remedies is undoubtedly incomplete, it is significant that only twenty-four herbal medicines were reported. A much longer list could be collected among rural Brazilians of the area, who also use most of the same herbs employed by the Munduruú.* This leads immediately to the question of whether the civilized inhabitants of the Amazon borrowed the medicinal preparations from the Indians or whether diffusion operated in the reverse direction. Although the use of herbs by the Indian population of the Amazon is undoubtedly a pre-Columbian practice, and although diffusion probably operated in both directions, it is very possible that the greatest borrowing was by the Indians. This is probably true for the Munduruú, although we cannot be so certain for the first Indian groups encountered by the Portuguese. The herbal knowledge of these coastal tribes is, of course, crucial to the question.

The Munduruú theory of disease exists side-by-side with certain sound empirical observations on the subject. They are well aware that epidemics are contracted through contact with white people. For example, when either my wife or I caught a cold, the Munduruú avoided close proximity to us. Even on those occasions when we fell ill after an epidemic had already developed in the village, they were inclined to blame us. Also, they recognized that residence along waterways or near swamps was often accompanied by fevers (malaria), and they knew that the savannah villages were therefore more salubrious. Both contagion and the unhealthfulness of certain locales were loosely connected with the prevalence of the sorcerer's evil objects, or *caxiri*, despite the contradiction implied. However, in this as in many other lines of thought, the Munduruú do not push logic to its conclusion, for the roots of the supernatural concepts are social and not intellectual. The empirical observations and supernatural concepts coexisted with little effort on the part of the Munduruú to integrate them, if, indeed, they were aware of the mutual antipathy of the two.

Moreover, despite their supernatural explanation of disease, the Munduruú freely sought the rational medication that we provided. Every day, a number of people came to our house for treatment, some from other villages; in only a very few cases did we have to seek out the sick and persuade them to accept our aid. Our experience in this matter was not unique, for both the mission and the Indian Post dispensed large quantities of medicine to Munduruú patients. Not even the shamans resisted treatment; many were, in fact, our most faithful patients.

There are a number of reasons for this lack of resistance to Western medicine by the Munduruú. Through long contact with the whites, they had come to recognize the efficacy of the white man's medicines, especially in the treatment of diseases they know to be associated with the civilized population. Some even know the names of specific remedies; I had the unusual experience of having a tattooed, septuagenarian Indian ask me for "*sulfa*."

* Note also the many herbal remedies reported by Wagley (1953, pp. 240-242) from the Amazon River town of Itá.

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This receptivity has, in part, been communicated to them by the whites. The Brazilian population of the near-by Tapajós River places high value upon modern medicines, despite their accompanying belief in witchcraft, their use of herbs, and occasional resort to shamanism. Wherever we traveled, we were continually visited by sick or wounded people. The fact that we were not medical practitioners did not affect our position as curers. It was sufficient that we were American scientists and must, therefore, possess adequate knowledge and equipment to cure almost any disease. Penicillin was endowed with quasi-magical qualities by the backwoods Brazilians, and they used it to cure backaches, sprains, and intestinal ailments, as well as various types of infection. These attitudes have diffused to the Mundurucú, and our medicines were accorded high prestige by them. But, more importantly, Western medicines accorded with their own techniques for the treatment of disease. They placed the use of aspirin, sulfa, and other drugs in the same category as their own herbal remedies, and believed that they repaired the damage done by the evil objects, or *caxaí*, of the sorcerer. Thus, they would go first to the shaman to have the intrusive object removed and then to us for medication; neither by itself was considered sufficient for a complete cure.

The accommodation of rational medication to aboriginal curing techniques furthered Mundurucú acceptance of Western medicine more than did the example and prestige of the white man. For example, the Mundurucú were convinced that a feverish person should be made cool. The result of this erroneous, albeit clear and simple, logic was that the sick took frequent baths in cold streams and lay upon the cool floors of their houses rather than in their hammocks. We, and the priests for many years before, repeatedly cautioned them against this practice, but our words went completely unheeded. The result was that a person afflicted with slight cold and fever soon developed a violent grippe. The Mundurucú were not impressed by the clear association between bathing and a worsened condition, for the seriousness of an illness was believed to be a direct function of the type and strength of the *caxaí* that caused it. Similarly, we had very little success in convincing the Mundurucú of the savannah villages that they could prevent malaria by purchasing mosquito nets and sleeping in them during their summer stay on the banks of the large streams. Whether our explanation that the *caxaí* that caused fever were afraid of mosquito netting was ultimately of some influence could not be ascertained. Needless to say, we were not looked upon as authorities on *caxaí*.

The techniques used to cure attacks by the animal spirits or by the *Tawapurí* are somewhat different from the remedies for *caxaí*. Although both involve the extraction of an intrusive object from the patient's body, different methods are used. Also, no herbal treatments are used to right the damage done by these supernaturals.

The malignant stone cast by the *Tawapurí* into its victim is considered far too dangerous to be sucked out by the shaman. Special precautions must be taken during a cure, and shamans are truly apprehensive while treating an afflicted person. The following case of a *Tawapurí* attack will perhaps illustrate

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755 this more vividly than could a generalized description. On this occasion, Maria, the wife of the shaman Vicente, had chosen the unpropitious hour of nightfall to walk on the path behind her house. She returned in a few moments shouting and screaming, her body doubled over with tremendous stomach pains. Her husband, Vicente, diagnosed her affliction as caused by *Turupari* attack, an analysis that followed quite naturally from the location and sudden violence of her pains and from the time and place of their onset. Vicente, although the strongest shaman in the village, did not feel able to cope with the *Turupari* himself, and he called in three other shamans who were residing in the village at that time. A lone shaman can deal adequately with *cauí*, but the Mundurucú usually try to gather as many practitioners as possible when the *Turupari* attacks. When all had assembled, Antonio, one of the assisting shamans, blew smoke on the sick woman and attempted unsuccessfully to extract the object by the common means of massaging the affected part and pushing it from the body with a squeezing motion of the hands. But he was forced to stop, for the malignant power of the *Turupari* was already causing pains in his arms. Vicente then took Antonio's place, with somewhat greater success. He, also, avoided direct physical contact with the stone, and massaged his wife's body and squeezed the objects out. He extracted a total of three stones. The first flew from her body into the air and directed itself toward the floor of the house, where the stones usually lodge themselves after extraction. But the stone swerved in mid-flight to avoid a bow, of which it was afraid, and escaped through a hole in the wall. The second, and largest, emerged from the woman's body and flew into the dirt floor near the wall of the house. The third stone was small, and Vicente was able to catch it with a wad of charred cotton as it came out of his wife's stomach. He dropped the stone and cotton in a fire that had been built in front of the doorway.

The shamans then turned to the problem of destroying the stone that had entered the floor of the house. While Antonio stood guard at one door, Vicente watched the other to make sure that the evil object did not escape. Another shaman, José, then pounded the end of a bow along the ground, driving the malignant object before it. When it was directly below the fire, he lifted the end of the bow quickly, and the stone was lifted into the blaze.

The stones destroyed, Vicente sucked at various parts of his wife's body to rearrange the internal organs and cleanse the damaged areas. At the conclusion of the treatment, his wife rested comfortably and no longer felt pain. But both Vicente and Antonio then began to feel ill owing to proximity to the hypermalignant objects. The other shamans then proceeded to cure them by sucking the parts of the body where the pain was localized.

The emotional tone of both shamans and witnesses during a *Turupari* cure is quite different from that prevailing in a treatment for *cauí*. The latter performances are characterized by a quiet interest on the part of the audience; the shaman is believed to be in full command of the situation and fear is minimal. But when one of the *Turupari*'s stones is being withdrawn from an afflicted person, both shamans and audience are nervous and tense. A number of shamans must be called upon to battle the evil, but despite their numbers the practitioners

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are still believed to be in great danger. The stone cannot be touched; small ones can be plucked from the patient's body or from the ground with a piece of charred cotton, but large stones are allowed to enter the ground and are then safely driven into a fire with the tip of a bow.

The *yakip* and *wirakad* sent by the souls of the game animals or by their spirit mothers cannot be touched either, but they are not considered as dangerous as the stones of the *Turupari*. To extract these malignant objects, the shaman, working alone, blows smoke upon the patient and massages his body. He then flicks the object out of the body with a *watem* feather upon which he has blown tobacco smoke. No attempt is made to catch and destroy the object, for this would further anger the spirits of the game. These cures are usually only temporarily efficacious, and other *yakip* or *wirakad* frequently strike the victim anew after his cure.

In addition to their supernatural curing techniques, most shamans are quite skilled in the secular treatment of broken bones, dislocated muscles, and similar ills. On one occasion, my wife was in acute discomfort from a strained muscle in her back. The shaman instructed her to lie face downward across a hammock, and our interpreter was told to hold her legs while I maintained a firm grip on her shoulders. He then probed the musculature in the small of her back with his fingertips. Although she complained only of a generalized backache, he apparently believed that the source of the trouble was to be found in this area. When the shaman found the difficulty, he ordered the interpreter to pull on her left leg at his command. He then pressed gently but firmly into the musculature with his two thumbs and issued the order. The treatment was quite effective, for his patient's pain was relieved immediately.

The preceding account represents a fairly comprehensive description of Munduruc maladies and their treatment. But a final affliction recognized by the Munduruc can be classified neither as illness nor wound. The concept of *ibakoxwm* is best translated as bad luck and is found widely distributed throughout the Amazon under the designation of *panema*. *Ibakoxwm* affects only men and becomes evident when a man hunts for several days without killing any game or prowls continually about the underbrush near the village without encountering a woman. So far as could be ascertained, bad luck is not caused by supernaturals. It strikes only men who do not rub their bodies daily after bathing with the ground root of a species of forest vine. The fragrance of this root lingers about the person and is thought to attract game animals and women. To insure good luck fully in one's pursuits, it is also believed necessary occasionally to drink sufficient quantities of this root mixed in water to induce vomiting. Most men undergo this purification process once or twice a year.

Shamanism and Spirits

Although Munduruc shamans are not thought to control and use particular spirits, they are believed to be in intimate contact with the supernatural world. The shamans' souls are said to have the ability to travel to the afterworlds and to the underworld of the *Kdexwuxut*, and they alone among the Munduruc can

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Dajoxuxapxip ceremonies. Since bathing in the stream was considered particularly dangerous to them, the members had to bathe in the village from gourds. Also, their obligation to sing the songs of the tapir allowed the *Bisáñ* little sleep during ceremonies. 796 224

When night fell, all fires of the village were extinguished and the *Bisáñ*, their captives, and the men fortunate enough to have escaped them reëntered the village in total darkness. The women shut themselves in their houses and did not dare look at the procession lest their next children be born with the fleshy hump found between the shoulders of the tapir, that is, hunchbacked. The procession ended in one of the houses, where the *Bisáñ* partook of a sweet manioc drink; after they were thus refreshed the women could look upon them with impunity.

A number of creatures were imitated on the final night of the ceremony, and songs appropriate to each species were sung. Among the performances was that for the land tortoise, in which the men imitated the animal and acted in this role as the pets of the women. All lined up in close order and pretended to accept chewed food from the mouths of their owners. The Mundurucú recall with glee that on one such ceremonial occasion a local Brazilian trader, who had been visiting the village, participated in the land tortoise imitation and actually ate the proffered food. In other sequences the grasshopper was emulated by squatting with stomach close to the ground and chirping, and the cry and hopping movements of the toucan were also enacted.

The animal performances lasted throughout the night, and dawn saw the conclusion of the ceremony and the departure of the guests.

The Curing Ceremony

The above performances of the Mundurucú ceremonial cycle are now defunct, and there is little likelihood that they will be revived. But some ritual activity is still extant. It will be noted that the following ceremonies, though quite important to Mundurucú society, involve little social participation beyond the confines of one or two villages. None calls for the large reunions characteristic of the ceremonies devoted to the animal spirits or to the trophy head. 796 755 [57]

The curing ceremony, referred to as *Pisehbiwaikapaxpex*, does not call for broad participation, although all the people of the village in which it is held usually attend as spectators. Four shamans and two men with special knowledge of songs are needed, however, and must frequently be summoned from a distance. The curing ceremony is held only in cases of robbery of the soul by the animal spirits, a belief which has already been described. Soul loss is commonly held responsible for illnesses in which general, progressive debility is noted without the specific symptoms usually indicative of bewitchment. Given this diagnosis, the shaman attempts to identify the violation for which the animal spirits have taken vengeance and then prescribes a curing ceremony. At least four shamans are necessary to effect a cure and two men are called in to sing the required songs. The latter are persons who, as was described in a previous chapter,* received

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755 knowledge of these supernaturally powerful songs through dreams. The ceremony takes place in the household of the sick person; a man, when ill, is usually brought from the men's house to his wife's dwelling, whatever the cause of the malady. The tapir skull used during the ceremonies of the game is installed in the house, and long tauari bark-wrapped cigarettes are inserted into either eye and three are thrust into the ground on the left side of the skull. The "dreamers" then seat themselves before this ensemble and proceed to sing to the various game animals, requesting that they return the soul of the sick person. While singing they wave a mutum feather tied to the end of a stick before the skull.

It will be recalled that there is a definite sequence in the passage of the soul from one species to another, proceeding from large game animals to smaller ones and then from the largest fish to the smaller ones until the soul arrives at the smallest fish and the patient dies. The songs of the dreamers are believed to be completely efficacious in securing the return of the stolen soul, but the soul is returned only when the dreamers sing the song of the animal that possesses the soul at the moment the song is being sung. Since the shamans and dreamers have no idea which animal has the soul at the time, and since there are a large number of animals into whose hands the soul passes (and, correspondingly, a large number of songs), the dreamers must trust to chance and luck that they will sing the right song at the appropriate instant. The choice of song is up to the dreamers, and they frequently sing for a long time before hitting upon the animal that has custody of the soul. Obviously, a great deal of risk is involved in this process, for the passage of time brings the patient and his soul nearer to their fatal destination. And as the journey lengthens, the condition of the sick person steadily worsens.

However, the dreamers generally succeed eventually in retrieving the soul, which is believed to return to the tapir skull used in the ceremony. This account of the procedure following the return of the soul is based upon a curing ceremony that I witnessed in the savannah village of Cabruá. Both doors of the house in which the rite was held had been covered with palm leaves in the belief that the soul of the patient was ashamed to be seen and would return only in the dark. At the conclusion of the song to the peccary, the shaman looked inside the tapir skull and announced that the soul had been in the custody of the peccaries and had just been returned. Their intent accomplished, the singers ceased their activity and aided the shamans in the subsequent process of repairing the harm done to the patient and restoring the soul to her body.

One of the four shamans present extracted the soul from the tapir skull with his hand and held it for some time, examining it closely. In the meantime, the patient was lying in a hammock covered with mosquito netting, and two men, neither of whom was a shaman, blew smoke under the netting through long tauari bark-wrapped cigarettes. At the conclusion of the fumigation the shaman returned the sick woman's soul to the tapir skull, and she was taken from her hammock and seated upon a mat. One of the women of the house poured several gourds of water over her in the belief that this would reduce her fever. The

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sick woman was then dried with a piece of cloth, and the shaman placed the lighted end of a cigarette in his mouth and blew smoke over her entire body. He then rubbed her legs from toes to thighs, blew more smoke upon her stomach and rubbed both front and back of her torso. Another shaman took his place and twice passed a palm leaf down her body and both arms. Each time, he cleaned the leaf of the malignant objects that it supposedly picked up from the patient's skin.

These ministrations were intended to rid the body of the sick woman of some of the accumulation of evil or extraneous objects that had entered her during her illness. An especially dangerous article was discovered in her chest, and the least powerful of the shamans applied his mouth to her body and sucked it out. He was immediately racked by a fit of violent coughing, and a shaman having somewhat more power sucked at his throat, whereupon the object lodged in his own throat. It was finally removed by the most powerful of the four shamans present. He, too, appeared to be choked by the malignant object but succeeded in spitting it out into his hand. All present were invited to look at it, and, evidently no longer dangerous, it was given to a small boy to throw into a fire.

The last part of the curing ceremony was the special duty of the only member of the *Bisiú* society present in the village. He approached the sick woman, chanting a song and stamping each foot upon the ground. In this manner he circled about her and then grasped her under the armpits and lifted her while stamping his feet. This process was believed to shake the last of the supernatural objects from her body, and she was then ready to have her soul restored. The shaman again plucked the soul from the tapir's skull and placed his clenched hand over the patient's head, making motions suggesting that he was placing the soul within. The sick woman, who was thought to be fully cured, returned to normal activity and enjoyed the appearance of restored health. Unfortunately, her condition, which was possibly tubercular, soon worsened, and again she began to cough steadily.

The Kaxiri

Certain supernatural beliefs and practices are connected with the *kaxiri*, or curved musical instruments of the Mundurucú. The instruments themselves have been somewhat inaccurately termed trumpets for lack of a better word, although in design and operation they more nearly approximate the oboe. Each Mundurucú village of the savannahs has a set of three such instruments. Each set belongs to a different clan, but their essential design and construction are the same, though with some variation in size. This has no ritual significance but is regarded by the Mundurucú as a sign of degeneration, for the *kaxiri* of different villages were said to be formerly of the same size and much larger than those of today. However, the three instruments composing any single set are purposely and traditionally graded in size.

The *kaxiri* are actually extremely simple instruments. Each is merely a long, hollow cylinder made of a very light wood, into the end of which is inserted a reed. Those of the village of Cabruá were 43, 46, and 52 inches long and the